

Message Text

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S E C R E T NOUAKCHOTT 2179

EXDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (P A R A 4)

DEPARTMENT PASS USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PBOR UN MR MO SP AG SS

SUBJECT: SAHARA WATCH: PARTITION VS ANNEXATION

REF: RABAT 5115; USUN 5264

1. IF WE ARE GOING TO BACK AWAY FROM ELOQUENT RE-STATEMENT OF U.S. DEDICATION TO SELF-DETERMINATION WHICH AMBASSADOR WHITE MADE A FEW DAYS AGO IN NEW YORK AND BEGIN, FOR PRAGMATIC GEOPOLITICAL REASONS, TO SUPPORT TAKEOVER OF SAHARA BY INTERESTED PARTIES, WE HAD BETTER EMBARK ON MAJOR EFFORT TO MAKE ABSOLUTELY SURE THAT TAKEOVER IS IN FACT A MAURITANIAN-MOROCCAN PARTITION AND NOT A UNILATERAL MOROCCAN ANNEXATION. ANEDPUBLIC AND PRIVATE MOROCCAN STATEMENTS COMING OUT OF RABAT, NEW YORK, AND MARRAKESH THIS PAST WEEK SUGGEST VERY STRONGLY THAT MOROCCANS HAVE NO INTENTION OF HONORING AGREEMENT THEY MADE WITH MAURITANIANS TO DIVVY UP SAHARA.

2. A MORE OR LESS EQUAL PARTITION OF SAHARA HAS SIGNIFICANTLY BETTER CHANCE OF ACCEPTANCE, ALBEIT GRUDGING, BY
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ALL EXPONENTS OF SELF-DETERMINATION IN UFRICU AND AROUND

WORLD, AND, IT WOULD SEEM FROM HERE, ABOVE ALL BY ALGERIA, THAN OUTRIGHT ANNEXATION BY HASSAN'S MOROCCO. THIS WOULD APPEAR TO BE PARTICULARLY SURE IF WE OR INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY CAN INSURE THAT PARTITION FORMULA INCLUDES SOME POLLING OF SAHARA RESIDENTS ON FINAL LOCATION OF PARTITION LINE AND ON THEIR DESIRES ABOUT BECOMING EITHER MOROCCANS OR MAURITANIANS.

3. MORE PRACTICALLY AND MORE SIGNIFICANTLY, IF MAURITANIAN ASPIRATIONS ARE FRUSTRATED BY A GREEDY MOROCCO, IT IS VIRTUAL CERTAINTY THAT GMRM, GIVEN MAURITANIAN DISTRUST AND DISLIKE OF MOROCCANS (SEE NOUAKCHOTT 1479), WILL MAKE DETERMINED EFFORT TO FORESTALL ESTABLISHMENT OF MOROCCAN AUTHORITY IN SOUTHERN TWO-THIRDS OF SAHARA OR TO OUST IT ONCE IMPOSED, SEEKING SUPPORT OF AND PERHAPS JOINING FORCES WITH POLISARIO AND ALGERIA (AND CONCEIVABLY EVEN LIBYA) TO THIS END. WHILE EACH MEMBER OF SUCH AN ANTI-MOROCCAN ALLIANCE WOULD CLEARLY HAVE QUITE DIFFERENT REASONS FOR PARTICIPATION, THEY WOULD HAVE SINGLE OBJECTIVE: CONTAINING MOROCCO AND KEEPING PRESSURE ON KING HASSAN.

4. MAURITANIANS HAVE BEEN OPETY, VIGOROUSLY, AND REGULARLY CALLING FOR DEPARTURE OF FOREIGN OCCUPIER FROM AND ASSERTING THEIR CLAIM TO ALL OF WESTERN SAHARA UP TO THE WADI DRAA (SOME 240 KILOMETERS NORTHWARD UP COAST FROM PRESENT MOROCCO-SAHARA FRONTIER) FOR 18 YEARS. THEY CAN BE COUNTED ON TO CONTINUE THEIR EFFORTS (WITHIN THE LIMITS OF THEIR ADMITTEDLY MODEST CAPABILITIES)--ALONE OR WITH OUTSIDE HELP--TO ESTABLISH THE GREATER MAURITANIA OF THEIR DREAMS FOR THE NEXT 18 YEARS OR FOR HOWEVER LONG IT TAKES TO OUST THE NEW FOREIGN COLONIZER FROM THEIR HOMELAND. FACT THAT NEW COLONIZER MAY BE THEIR MOROCCAN "BROTHERS" WILL NOT ALTER THE QUESTION.

5. THAT BEING THE CASE, IF THE USG DECIDES THAT THE DEVELOPING SAHARA SITUATION NOW REQUIRES US TO ABANDON OUR PREVIOUS STANCE OF STRICT NEUTRALITY AMONG PARTIES AND TO BEGIN, IN ORDER TO INSURE A PEACEFUL RESOLUTION OF PROBLEM, TO SUPPORT ACTIVELY ONE OF THE PROTAGONISTS--

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MOROCCO, WE SHOULD IN RETURN INSIST THAT KING HASSAN PURSUE A RESOLUTION OF SAHARA PROBLEM WHICH MAXIMIZES CHANCES OF GENERAL INTERNATIONAL ACCEPTANCE AND MINIMIZES POSSIBILITY OF FURTHER REGIONAL INSTABILITY AND POTENTIAL CONFLICT. PARTITION, YES; ANNEXATION, NO.HANDYSIDE

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